



News from . . .

Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

Statement of Senator Feinstein on the Reauthorization of the Assault Weapons Ban March 1, 2004

Washington, DC -- A coalition of community leaders – including dozens of law enforcement officers and chiefs – today joined Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), John W. Warner (R-VA), Charles Schumer (D-NY), and Mike DeWine (R-OH) at a news conference and rally in support of a measure to extend the assault weapons ban by 10 years. The Senate is set to vote on an amendment to reauthorize the ban on Tuesday, March 2. The following is the prepared text of Senator Feinstein's statement:

"A gunman at a McDonald's in San Ysidro, California, opens fire with an UZI, killing 21. A drifter in a Stockton Schoolyard kills 5 and wounds 30 with an AK-47. A disgruntled client at the 101 California office building in San Francisco opens fire with two Tec-DC9s, killing 8 and wounding 6.

These shootings demonstrate the fundamental danger assault weapons pose to our society. Yet the federal ban on assault weapons -- put in place a decade ago -- will expire this September if Congress and the President fail to extend it.

Without an extension, weapons like Uzis and AK-47s will once again flood the streets of America. Tomorrow, the Senate will vote on an amendment to extend the ban by 10 years.

No one thought we could get the original ban approved a decade ago. No one thought we could get it reauthorized. But tomorrow -- with your help -- we will prove everyone wrong -- just like we did 10 years ago.

This is possible only through the courage of two men here today -- John Warner and Mike DeWine.

They deserve our thanks and our most profound appreciation. They have seen that the Assault Weapons ban has worked. And have stood up and said to our Senate colleagues that it needs to be reauthorized. John Warner and Mike DeWine understand that Assault weapons are weapons of war. They understand that Assault Weapons are devised to kill a large number of people in the shortest amount of time possible. They understand that Assault Weapons have no place in our society.

I devoted myself in 1993 to see that these weapons were no longer on the streets. And in these past 10 years the ban has worked: It has reduced the proportion of banned assault weapons

traced to crime by two-thirds. And it has not resulted in the confiscation of a single weapon from a law-abiding American, as some feared.

That is why the American people support the ban: Seventy-seven percent of the American people support it. 66 percent of gun owners support it. And yet, it is an uphill battle to get it reauthorized. You would think it would be a no-brainer.

We've exempted by name 670 weapons. We have support from virtually the entire law enforcement community, dozens of community organizations. And the President has said he supports the extension of the current ban.

Why is it so hard? It is hard because the NRA opposes any regulations on any weapons anywhere in the country – no matter how sensible. In my book, that is just plain wrong. It is time to stand up to the NRA.

It is time to break the logjam on gun regulations. It is time to extend the assault weapons ban.

The majority in America has rights:

- We have the right to have kids play in the park and not get shot.
- We have the right to do business without having an employee walk into an office building and mow people down.
- We have the right to send our kids to school and not worry about if they will make it home.

Assault weapons are weapons of war. They don't belong on the streets of America. The time is now for the Senate to extend the assault weapons ban."

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